

Commissioner's Weekly Wrap Up

DCS Communications Office

July 15, 2005

The Week Ahead

Thurs., July 21 – The Commissioner a CSA celebration in Nashville.

Fri., July 22 – The Commissioner attends an adoption party at the Center for Adoption in Nashville.

DCS Employees Receive Pay Increase

Submitted by William Haynes, Executive Director, Human Resources Development

State government employees, including most DCS employees, received a 3 percent pay raise, effective July 1. Employees in the case manager series (Case Manager 1-Team Coordinator) received an additional 6.2 percent for a total increase of 9.2 percent. The raises for case managers is the second year of a three-year salary enhancement intended to bring DCS starting salaries in line with those of neighboring states' public child welfare agencies. The salary increase will appear on employees' July 29 paycheck.

Car Wash Benefits Children of Recently Deceased Wilder YDC Officers

Submitted by Clara T. Harris, ASA2, Accreditation Mgr., Wilder Youth Development Center

Corporal Kelvin Starks is heading up a charitable drive for the children of two recently deceased Wilder Youth Development Center officers. Over the past two months, Kerry Steward and Arthur Anderson passed away, leaving two children each as survivors. Officer Starks immediately set up a trust fund for the four children with a goal of raising \$4,000, or \$1,000 per child. To get the drive started, Starks generously donated 10 percent of the total.

Part of the fund-raiser included a car wash, held in Wilder's parking lot on July 1. From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. that day, Wilder officers, including Cpl. Starks, Kelvin Harris, Donice Bradley, Roy McBride, three Haywood County High School basketball players and Tyrone Jones, a friend of Cpl. Starks. The next project in the fund-raising drive is a candle sale. One of the corporate sponsors is Pizza Hut, which is donating free pizza.

To donate to this cause, make checks payable to The Anderson-Steward Trust Fund, and send to Amy Barcroft, Superintendent, Wilder Youth Development Center, P O Box 639, Somerville, TN 38608.

East Region Community Forums

Submitted by K. Danielle Edwards, Public Information Officer

The Department of Children's Services is hosting open community forums as a follow-up to a series of similar community forums that were held statewide last summer.

These scheduled forums are intended to improve communication between East Tennessee residents, community partners and DCS.

"The goal is to link the communities together to develop resources that will better the lives of the children and families," said Kirk Lane, regional administrator for the East Region. "The more knowledge the public gains about how the Department of Children's Services works, the easier it is for us all to work together."

The department will have a variety of its specialists on hand at the meetings. Experts in child protective services, juvenile justice, social services, resource-parent support and legal experts will be there. So will those who work closely with adoption and foster parenting. These forums will give citizens and DCS representatives the chance to talk directly to one another.

DCS wants to build stronger ties with the respective communities. Those relationships in turn should help lead to safer and healthier homes for children and families in Tennessee.

Community forums are scheduled for the following:

- 4 p.m. Tues., July 12, at Claiborne High School, 815 Davis Drive, New Tazewell
- 4 p.m. Thurs., July 14, at First Baptist Church, 139 College St., Madisonville
- 5:30 p.m. Tues., July 19, at Pellissippi State Community College, 10915 Hardin Valley Road, Knoxville
- 5:30 p.m. Tues., July 26, at Lenoir City Library, 100 W. Broadway, Lenoir City
- 5 p.m. Wed., Aug. 10, at Union County Courthouse, 901 Main St., Maynardville
- 4 p.m. Thurs., Aug 11, at First Baptist Church, 139 College St., Madisonville
- 5 p.m. Thurs., Aug. 18, at Morgan County Courthouse, 414 Kingston St., Wartburg

Health Advocacy Teams Want to Serve You

Submitted by Mary Beth Franklyn, TennCare Liaison, Blue Ribbon Committee

It is the mission of the Health Advocacy Units to provide case managers with the infrastructure and support to make sure that the children in our care receive all needed health services.

The Health Advocacy Unit includes:

- Health Advocate Liaison (formerly the TennCare representative)
- Services and Appeals Tracking (SAT) Coordinator
- Nurse
- Psychologist
- Educational Specialist

The Health Advocacy team wants to serve the region and case managers by being the source for knowledge about health. Case managers, families and children are the customers for the Health Advocacy teams.

Accessing services

If you do not receive an appointment for a child in a timely manner, or you need help changing the primary care physician (PCP), the Health Advocate Liaison is there to assist you in making sure these things happen.

What is timely? You should get a PCP or dental appointment within 21 days of your request. You should get an appointment with a specialist within 30 days.

Remember, ***don't struggle to find a provider***; call TennCare Select or the BHO directly, and work with your Health Advocate Liaison when there are concerns about accessing any health services. They want to be proactive and serve you.

While you may think you don't want to have to “*challenge*” the “*system*” to arrange the needed health care for your child, remember that the state of Tennessee has paid the MCO and BHO to provide the services. *If services are not readily available, filing an appeal is the remedy.* The Health Advocate liaison can complete this simple form for you.

Tracking health care services

The SAT coordinator is your resource for making sure that you follow up on recommended services, reschedule canceled appointments and have the details necessary to document the services provided to your child.

When the SAT asks you for information, the SAT is assisting with the overall well being of that child, by providing you with personalized record keeping on each child. This information is also used to respond to queries from advocacy representatives or the appeals unit.

Follow up care from EPSDT

The Health Advocacy nurse reviews the findings of the EPSDT screening and provides information on the recommended follow up services. Please contact the nurse if you do not understand what service needs to be provided.

Medications

DCS is committed to monitoring the psychotropic medications prescribed to children in our care. If you have any questions about the medications that your child is taking, or if a foster parent calls you about side effects, please contact the nurse for consultation.

Dr. Deborah Gatlin is our psychiatrist in Central Office, and she can provide consultation on specific cases. The information in the medication tracking system is being used to monitor medications. Currently, training is being developed about informed consent and psychotropic medications. You will have this training made available to you in the coming months.

What the psychologist can do for you

Interpreting or implementing recommendations from a behavioral health assessment or a psychological can be overwhelming for a non-clinician. Use your health unit psychologist to assist with understanding the evaluation and the appropriate next steps.

Consult your psychologist for help with the following:

- Reviewing treatment plans/answer questions
- Reviewing mental health service issues related to appeals and provide interpretation
- Reviewing the psychological evaluations and determine the identified TennCare services (and other services) from the recommendation so you can set the appropriate appointments and follow up care

What the educational specialist can do for you

If you have a child that receives special education services, or you think they should be receiving special education services, the educational specialist is your resource. Attending an IEP meeting on a complex case alone is a challenge; consult with your educational specialist and get the help you need to communicate all the important issues with the school.

Complex cases

For difficult cases with medical care, or behavioral care, you need to consult with the Health Advocacy Team. Referrals can be made to the Centers of Excellence. Currently, all regions do not have Centers of Excellence (COE) within their geographical area; however, referrals can be made. DCS is working with the Center of Excellence and the Governor's Office to expand COE services.

Core Leadership – June 28, 2005

**Core Leadership Meeting
Debra Valentine, Presiding
June 28, 2005**

Commissioner's Comments

The Commissioner reviewed the Children's Rights, Inc. letter with Core Leadership Team members. Areas of progress identified include:

- The finalized Needs Assessment expenditure process for the current fiscal year (The 2006 plan has been completed).
- Improvement of caseload and supervisor ratios, much of which was due to data clean up.
- Turnover issues. William Haynes feels the agency is on track and has drafted a plan, which has been reviewed by Andy Shookhoff, and was submitted to the Technical Assistance Committee (TAC) on July 11.
- SIU investigations have improved and have data sets.
- The last regional administrator evaluation will be sent to Elizabeth Driver and Doug Dimond.
- Vast improvements have been made in the FHACP.
- Sibling placements are being measured.

Request from DHS for DCS Participants: Re: Project Steering Committee

DHS Commissioner, Virginia Lodge, announced that they are starting a build for a new eligibility system. We need DCS representation from the Office of Information Systems and program staff in this process. The Commissioner needs names of identified participants. Faye Harris has been involved for months in this interface. Audrey stated that Shalonda Cawthon would be a good fit. Betty Miller was also recommended.

Implementation Support Team Updates

Elizabeth Black distributed meeting minutes from the Implementation Support Team, which meets weekly. We are getting prioritized areas from the regions, and one of the identified areas was placement stability. We have a lot of different requirements and are not consistent on how we are calculating placement stability. We were trying to come to a consensus and define placement stability.

Unified Placement

The Commissioner will develop an operational definition of unified placement. She will layout the goal and vision in order to communicate a common language about unified placement. DCS will have a common philosophy on how we make placement decisions regarding children.

Finding Out of Home Care

A new custody report says we have decreased overall numbers by over 300 children in the last year. The number in private placement has remained constant and a little higher due to loss of placements in DCS foster homes. We are getting more care from more expensive private

placements. We need to build up our foster home base. We have to look at every current foster home and possibly close some of the homes. Foster homes come into the system for relative placements and become disillusioned with the system. We need to have emphasis of DCS homes as options. The Youth Villages project looked at children in care that could be in their own home with appropriate services. Randal Lea will meet with three regions about data from the report to explore alternatives to out of home care. In the original sample, they found many of the children in the process of having adoptions finalized. Many of the children are in relative placements or appropriate level of care. Therefore, they had to have a new sample. The Commissioner stressed the importance of timeliness. We have to have a sense of urgency.

Announcements

Knox County candidate Rob Ross accepted the regional administrator position. He has a social services background and has worked as CEO of an agency.

CSA Transition Update

The transition is proceeding as scheduled for the first three regions, with South Central, Upper Cumberland and Northwest transitioning in August. Things are moving as planned with tremendous support from fiscal and personnel.

Core Leadership – July 12, 2005

Core Leadership Meeting Stacy Miller, Presiding July 12, 2005

Commissioner's Comments

The Office of Information Systems staff celebration was held during the beginning of Core Leadership for their work on the data reports. Andy Shookhoff talked briefly to OIS staff on their improvements on data reporting, stating that the agency has made significant progress and great strides. The Commissioner acknowledged Rhonda Simpson's effort in accomplishing this task, and acknowledged and thanked OIS staff for their hard work on this effort. It's important to have good data to inform good decision-making for children and families.

Implementation Support Team (IST) Status Report

The Commissioner stated that this has been an incredible experience. The IST members have been working with regions on their regional implementation plans. The regions first quarterly report is due at the end of the month and will be in the PIP format. Regional liaisons need to provide assistance to the regions. Each region will report out twice a year. All 12 regions will provide a progress report within the next six months. CLT members need to be a part of the

audience to provide support to the regions. At some point, we want to invite judges, legislators and school principals to the regional presentations.

ERP Report

Ken Sanders distributed a copy of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) report, which is spearheaded by Finance and Administration (F&A). ERP is an integrated software package that is used to perform administrative business functions such as financials and accounting, procurement, payroll, benefits, and personnel administration. This would replace Stars and Human Resource system and will have impact with SACWIS. Sanders has a meeting scheduled with an F&A project manager next week.

DCS Cultural Competency Plan

The Committee of Multicultural Affairs is a standing committee that includes staff from across the state in a variety of capacities from a variety of levels. A charge of the committee was to develop a cultural competency plan and training curriculum for DCS. The committee decided that additional skills and expertise are needed to move this forward. The Chairman of the committee, Vicki Burton, has sent a letter to the Commissioner on behalf of the committee asking for a consultant to provide technical assistance. The committee is in the process of developing a RFP.

An overview of the training will be conducted at the Commissioner's retreat in August. The Commissioner would like the committee to focus on our greatest disparity with overrepresentation in juvenile justice

Cultural awareness needs to be integrated into everything we do. We look at our current curriculum and infuse cultural awareness and competency into what we do. This work should be fun and celebrating diversity and differences and learning about each other's cultures.

Path to Excellence (P2E)

The end of the contempt motion of the P2E extends to February 2006. The Commissioner thinks it would be advantageous to have a statewide Advisory Committee to the Commissioner.



Never look down on anybody unless you are helping him up. – Jesse Jackson

